

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 308216

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM USNATO DATED DECEMBER 9, 1977
SENT USDEL SECRETARY ACFT, SECSTATE WASHDC INFO ALL NATO
CAPITALS, AMMAN, BEIRUT, CAIRO, DAMASCUS, JIDDA, MADRID, MOSCOW,
TEL AVIV, JERUSALEM, BAGHDAD, TRIPOLI, USUN NEW YORK
IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 12449

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, NAC, IS, EG, XF

SUBJECT: DECEMBER NAC MINISTERIAL: RESTRICTED SESSION
DISCUSSION OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

1. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OF MIDDLE EAST DISCUSSION
DURING AFTERNOON SESSION OF DECEMBER 8 NAC MINISTERIAL.
TOPIC WAS TREATED IN DETAIL AT THE REQUEST OF SEVERAL
MINISTERS. IN ADDITION TO SECRETARY VANCE, SPEAKERS
INCLUDED UK FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN, FRG STATE SECRETARY
VAN WELL AND TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER CAGLAYANGIL.
THIS CABLE HAS NOT BEEN CLEARED BY SECRETARY'S PARTY.

2. THE SECRETARY BEGAN THIS DISCUSSION BY NOTING THAT
SOME OF WHAT HE WOULD SAY WOULD BE OBVIOUS TO ALL, BUT
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 308216

BORE REPETITION. THE LAST TWO WEEKS HAD WITNESSED
COURAGEOUS AND HISTORIC ACTION LEADING TO FUNDAMENTAL
CHANGES IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE DECADES-OLD WALL OF
MISTRUST HAD BEEN SHATTERED. THE MIDDLE EAST WOULD NOT
BE THE SAME AGAIN.

3. THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT AS STEPS HAD PROCEEDED IN

SEPTEMBER TO BRING ABOUT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AND AS RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS HAD COME CLOSER, MISTRUST HAD RETURNED ON BOTH SIDES. NEITHER SIDE REALLY BELIEVED THE OTHER SIDE WAS GOING TO BARGAIN IN GOOD FAITH. WHEN SADAT TOOK HIS DRAMATIC STEP, HE WAS ABLE TO BREAK DOWN THAT WALL OF MISTRUST. THIS AFFECTED A SEA CHANGE, SETTING IN PLACE AN IRREVERSIBLE COURSE OF ACTION. THE PEACE PROCESS HAD BEEN GIVEN A NEW MOMENTUM. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, CONFLICTING CURRENTS HAD BEEN SET UP WHICH IN ONE SENSE DREW PEOPLE APART AND IN ANOTHER SENSE BROUGHT PEOPLE TOGETHER.

4. SECRETARY VANCE APPEALED TO THE MINISTERS TO DO ALL THEY COULD TO SUPPORT THE DISCUSSIONS STARTING IN CAIRO ON DECEMBER 14. HE URGED THAT CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION BE KEPT OPEN TO ALL THE PARTIES, WHETHER IN CAIRO OR NOT AND HOPED THAT THOSE WHO HAD DECIDED NOT TO PARTICIPATE WOULD EVENTUALLY BE DRAWN INTO THE PROCESS. AS CANADIAN SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS JAMIESON HAD POINTED OUT, SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES INVOLVING THE NATURE OF THE PEACE SETTLEMENT, WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORY, AND THE PALESTINIANS REMAINED. THESE ISSUES WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH. IN CAIRO THE US WOULD WORK TOWARDS BRINGING ALL THE PARTIES TOGETHER IN GENEVA. THE SECRETARY HOPED IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP AS THE RESULT OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 308216

CAIRO MEETING, A FRAMEWORK FOR THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES EVEN IF ONLY A SET OF PRINCIPLES. THAT MIGHT CLEAR ZBAY THE PROBLEMS AND LEAD TO A WIDER CONFERENCE. ALL THE LEADERS WERE SAYING THEY WERE LOOKING FOR AN OVERALL OR COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT INCLUDING ONE COVERING THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AND THE NATURE OF THE PEACE.

5. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT HE WOULD GO TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN SUPPORT OF PEACE EFFORTS AND WITH THE HOPE OF MAKING REAL PROGRESS. THE US HAD TWO OBJECTIVES: TO ESTABLISH THE FRAMEWORK AND TO TRY TO KEEP ALL THE PARTIES FROM MOVING TOO FAR AWAY FROM THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS SO THEY COULD BE BROUGHT BACK INTO THE PEACE PROCESS. NOTHING COULD BE MORE IMPORTANT. HOWEVER, IT WAS UNLIKELY IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE THAT THOSE WHO HAD EXCLUDED THEMSELVES FROM THE PEACE CONFERENCE IN CAIRO WOULD REJOIN THE PROCESS OF CAIRO. THIS WAS NOT TO SAY THAT THEY WOULD NOT COME BACK AT SOME LATER POINT.

6. OWEN (UK) NOTED THAT BEGIN HAD BEEN TO LONDON FOR A MEETING WHICH OWEN DESCRIBED AS VERY INTERESTING. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD BE EXAGGERATED TO SAY THAT

ANYTHING HAPPENED TO GIVE OPTIMISM ABOUT CHANGES IN THE POSITION OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. NEVERTHELESS, THE EFFECT OF THE SADAT VISIT UPON BEGIN HAD BEEN PROFOUND -- PSYCHOLOGICALLY PROFOUND. IT WAS NECESSARY TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM COULD BE RESOLVED, AND THE ISRAELIS HAD TO RESPOND ON KEY ISSUES, ESPECIALLY TERRITORY. OWEN NOTED THAT HE HAD PRESSED BEGIN TO SAY THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD NO TERRITORIAL DEMANDS, BUT ONLY SECURITY REQUIREMENTS. FOR FURTHER PROGRESS, HOWEVER, OWEN SUGGESTED THAT ALL PARTIES NEEDED GREATER FLEXIBILITY, E.G., IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO BE COMMITTED TO THE CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE.

7. OWEN NOTED THAT PREVIOUSLY ISRAEL HAD FEARED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 308216

SOMEHOW, THAT EVEN IF THEY RETURNED TERRITORY, SIGNED AGREEMENTS, AND DID ALL THAT WAS REQUIRED, THEY WOULD REMAIN PARIAS IN THE AREA. THIS FEAR HAS NOW BEEN DRAMATICALLY CHANGED, AND THEY PERCEIVED THE PROSPECTS FOR REAL PEACE. TO OWEN THERE WAS THE SLIGHT DANGER, HOWEVER, THAT ISRAEL MIGHT NOT RESPOND QUICKLY ENOUGH AS THERE WAS NEED FOR AN ISRAELI RESPONSE THAT WOULD ALLOW OTHER ARAB STATES SUCH AS SYRIA TO RETURN.

8. VAN WELL (FRG) ADDED BONN'S IMPRESSIONS OF ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN'S RECENT VISIT. HE NOTED THAT DAYAN ALSO HAD STRESSED THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SIDE OF THE SADAT VISIT, AND INTIMATED THAT MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE WERE NOT REALLY DISCUSSED. THE MAJOR EFFORT WAS TO BREAK THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIER AND FOLLOWING THE VISIT A NEW SITUATION HAS ARISEN. VAN WELL NOTED THAT DAYAN HAD STRESSED THAT WESTERN EUROPEANS SHOULD SUPPORT THE SADAT INITIATIVE AS THE MOTOR FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS. HE CONFIRMED, HOWEVER, THAT DAYAN HAD MAINTAINED ISRAEL'S KNOWN POSITIONS:

-- NO RETURN TO THE 1967 BORDERS;

-- NO ACCEPTANCE OF AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE; AND

-- NO RECOGNITION OR CONTACTS WITH THE PLO.

9. VAN WELL SAID THAT DAYAN UNDERSTOOD THAT SADAT'S POSITION DIFFERED FROM ISRAEL'S AND THAT NEITHER COULD NOW ACCEPT THE OTHER'S POSITION. DAYAN, HOWEVER, WAS CONFIDENT THAT COMPROMISES WERE POSSIBLE IN FUTURE TALKS AND HOPED OTHERS WOULD JOIN THEM. DAYAN APPARENTLY CONCEIVED OF BILATERAL TALKS WITH EGYPT TO RESOLVE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 308216

BILATERAL QUESTIONS (ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD NOT EXCLUDE A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ON PALESTINE); AND A MULTILATERAL GROUP ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. VAN WELL ALSO SAID THAT DAYAN WAS CONFIDENT THAT SADAT HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES, AND THAT THE MODERATE ARAB STATES, ALTHOUGH CAUTIOUS IN THEIR PRONOUNCEMENTS, WANT SADAT TO STAY AT THE HELM.

10. VAN WELL TOLD THE MINISTERS THAT THE FRG APPRECIATED SADAT'S COURAGEOUS GESTURE, AND HAD NOTED TO DAYAN THAT BONN SAW A GREAT NEED FOR ISRAEL TO RESPOND IN KIND AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE INITIATIVE. VAN WELL INDICATED THAT ISRAEL RECOGNIZED THE MIDDLE EAST WAS NOT A LOCAL PROBLEM AND THAT ISRAEL MUST CONTRIBUTE TO THE MOMENTUM. DAYAN, HOWEVER, SAID THAT IF OTHER ARAB STATES WERE NOT WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CAIRO TALKS, ISRAEL WOULD COME TO A SEPARATE AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT, IF CAIRO WAS WILLING. THIS WAS NOT, HOWEVER, ISRAEL'S PREFERRED SOLUTION OR THE PURPOSE OF ITS POLICY, BUT DEFINITELY A SECOND-BEST OUTCOME.

11. CAGLAYANGIL (TURKEY) SHARED HIS IMPRESSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST RESULTING FROM HIS RECENT VISIT TO CAIRO. HE SUGGESTED THAT IT WAS OBVIOUS TO ALL THAT WITH SADAT'S INITIATIVE, THE MIDDLE EAST HAD ENTERED A NEW PHASE BUT IT WOULD BE SOME WHILE BEFORE A JUDGMENT COULD BE MADE ON THE COURAGEOUS SADAT INITIATIVE. CAGLAYANGIL NOTED THAT HE HAD SPOKEN WITH BOTH EGYPTIAN

AND ARAB PERSONALITIES, AND THE EGYPTIANS HAD ASSURED HIM THAT EGYPT WAS NOT ATTEMPTING TO REACH A FINAL POLITICAL

SOLUTION WITH ISRAEL BUT TO UNFREEZE THE SITUATION THROUGH A "SPECTACULAR" INITIATIVE. CERTAIN ARAB PERSONALITIES, HOWEVER, RESPONDED THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANCE IN THE INITIATIVE BEYOND SADAT'S DETERMINATION TO FIND PEACE, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 06 STATE 308216

SINCE BY TRAVELING TO JERUSALEM, HE HAD RECOGNIZED THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL IN THE MOST COMPLETE AND OFFICIAL WAY POSSIBLE. ISRAEL IN THEIR EYES HAD NOW GAINED ONE OF ITS BASIC GOALS, AND IT WAS UP TO ISRAEL TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT GESTURE VERY SOON OR SADAT'S POSITION WOULD BECOME VERY DELICATE. SADAT HAD OBVIOUSLY NOT SOLD HIS INITIATIVE TO MANY IN THE ARAB WORLD, AND THE POSITION OF HIS CRITICS

WOULD BE REINFORCED IN THE ABSENCE OF AN ISRAELI GESTURE.
WITHOUT A SUITABLE ISRAELI REACTION, THE ARAB POSITION
COULD BECOME EVEN MORE UNBENDING AND THE INITIATIVE
ABORTED.

12. CAGLAYANGIL STRESSED THAT IT WAS UP TO ALL, BUT PARTICULARLY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE WITH SPECIFIC INFLUENCE, TO PRESS ISRAEL TO PROVIDE A COUNTERPART TO SADAT'S GESTURE. ADDITIONALLY, THERE COULD BE NO VALID SOLUTION TO ME PROBLEMS WITHOUT PARTICIPATION OF THE PALESTINIANS, AND IT WAS RISKY TO BANK ON ANY DIVISION OF THE ARAB WORLD. INDEED AN ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT ANY DIVISION OF THE ARAB WORLD COULD BACKFIRE. BENNETT UNQUOTE VANCE

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